

LAUNCH STATEMENT AND CONSTITUTION OF GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! alongside supporters of the Accord, Black Triangle disability rights and 32 CSM campaigns have united to hold pickets of the Atos centre in Glasgow over the last four months. With the aim of continuing these and escalating our actions against Atos and the welfare cuts we believe the establishment of a 'Glasgow Against Atos' campaign is required. It is widely recognised that 80% of the cuts are still to be forced through. We recognise that it is the actions of those at present under attack - the disabled - that have shown the way forward. We want to organise and build on the militancy and determination that they and their supporters have shown in resisting and challenging the austerity agenda. Unity in action is absolutely necessary. Those who plan and implement the cuts are united. We have to match, broaden and better that unity. We are launching Glasgow Against Atos on the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. We stand with all those fighting the cuts and call for the fullest mobilisation of everyone: individuals, political, community, trade union, unemployed, claimants and student organisations. We call for action and open, democratic campaigning and organisation. JOIN US!

AIMS

GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS completely rejects the government's use of testing to remove vital support and benefits from those unable to work through disability and illness. We oppose and will aim to exploit fully, for our own ends, the involvement of Atos in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

ACTION

GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS will organise and support every protest, action, meeting and initiative taken by the disabled and their supporters to challenge government and state attacks on welfare.

UNITY

GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS welcomes and actively seeks the broadest involvement from all those who support its aims and will seek to build the fullest unity in action and organisation. We will seek to sign up organisations and individuals as public supporters of the campaign.

OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC

GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS founds itself on open, collective action and structure. Open, regular meetings are proposed as the means for taking action forward. All can speak, all can contribute, all can be represented. We completely reject censorship and bans on political views and expression. All can distribute material and display their political affiliations.

Glasgow Against Atos take action!

The Glasgow Against Atos campaign got off to inspiring start on 26 October with a rolling picket of locations complicit in the war on welfare and the Atos multinational. All the people present took part in the understanding that Atos, a company hired on an over £100mn contract to find sick and disabled people fit for work, and their employers, the Department for work and pensions, are unfit for honest work in the interests of claimants and therefore must be organised against and got rid of!



Assembling at the notorious Atos test centre on Cadogan Street GAA supporters hit city centre targets including the co-operative bank and the Royal Bank of Scotland on Gordon Street before walking to the plush offices of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in the Trongate. The picket returned to Cadogan Street after that where supporters of the Black Triangle disability rights campaign, Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! and the 32 CSM distributed benefit advice sheets to claimants being assessed. Speeches and chants were made throughout the action with a loudspeaker and hundreds of leaflets publicising the attacks on welfare and GAA's next organising meeting (details below) distributed.



Solidarity with the sick and disabled! Oppose the war on welfare!
Visit the following to find out more! Help us build the campaign!
'Glasgow Against Atos' on facebook
glasgowagainstatos.wordpress.com

GAA contact number: 07734348065

Next GAA campaign meeting:
Organising action against Atos planning meeting
Wednesday 14 November, 7.30-9.30pm
Downstairs in Bar Bacchus,
80 Glassford Street,
Glasgow G1 1UR

GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS

Glasgow Against Atos (or 'GAA') as it became known, ~~was a direct,~~ was a grass roots, direct action group. GAA was formed around early 2012, by 'Jan' (Janice) Dick and Linda W. Both anarchists; Jan and Linda, who was involved with the Glasgow occupy movement, Jan's husband had been subjected to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) - they decided something had to be done to highlight and make public the unfair system of the WCA.

Although anarchist by nature – other anarchists would later join GAA – GAA was always defined as a non-political group, and open to any political activists and groups. This allowed GAA to have a lot of self-autonomy and political movement – it also as GAA was to find as the campaign progressed caused quite a few problems.

GAA was basically a single issue campaign – to see an end to the WCA and to oppose Atos (a French IT company paid by the government to undertake the WCA – pseudo medicals to assess if a benefit claimant was fit to work, and if so their entitlement to benefit was removed.) Although single issue by definition, GAA also campaigned against the bedroom tax (a tax created by the government for those with more rooms than the government deemed necessary, and which affected many disabled people who used a second room for their carers or to store medical equipment.) GAA did involve itself within the anti-bedroom campaign, but never became prominent within this movement largely due to other bigger political and activist groups being better established and having more organisation.

GAA was never defined purely as a disability rights group like Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) or Black Triangle (so named after the black triangle many disabled people were made to wear by the Nazi's as being seen as 'asocial'), but we did have many disabled people campaigning with us. The fact that GAA had so many active members whether political activist or as a disabled person protesting against Atos shows the appeal at a grass roots level that GAA had. GAA also protested against the group G4S (the security guards within the WCA centres and job centres.)

Although GAA held meetings (usually in the Unite the Union office in Glasgow), this being mostly due to its union oriented members (if there ever was a 'membership' to GAA), GAA had no real planning or structure to its campaign, it had no hierarchy as such, which made infiltrating the group or counter intelligence by the police difficult. In fact this was one of GAA's main strengths that it had no real leadership (although Jan remained the figurehead throughout GAA's activities), if Jan could not organise a demo, or event, then others could take over, this gave GAA a very flexible approach to its actions, which also - it's fair to say, the actions benefitted from some of the activists that supported GAA, who were long-term political activists well versed to direct action and political demonstrations.

GAA's basic premise was its famous monthly picket outside the Atos centre at Cadogan Street in Glasgow, which was held on the last Friday of the month. During the demo, members would form a 'rolling picket' and march through the city streets waving placards and handing out leaflets to expose Atos and the WCA.



(Monthly picket outside Cadogan Street)



(Rolling Picket 2013)

GAA did do other actions at Cadogan St – which was chosen as a symbol of everything GAA disliked about the government and Atos, there was a National Remembrance Day For Atos Victims (06/09/2013) and an Atos National Demo part of a UK wide day of action against Atos 19/02/2014. GAA member David Adam was the Atos National Demo admin for Scotland, and also hosted the Glasgow demo, which had one of the highest turnout's and remembered for it's one minute silence with a mass of around 28 whistles and horns (we simply we're not going to be silenced), which if you see the You Tube video on the Glasgow Against Atos Fb site was truly deafening!



(National Remembrance Day For Atos Victims 2013.)



(Atos National Demo – Glasgow)

GAA of course was involved in many political events and protests – and supported as a group or its members individually too many events to list. Most notably in Glasgow was the Glasgow City Council Rotten to the Core event 03/08/2013.



(Glasgow City Council – ‘Rotten to the Core’ demo)

Protesting the Tory party conference in Edinburgh 15/03/2014, GAA, turned up at 9am, even before the police had arrived, and were the only group to be outside the actual conference centre, and managed to get some support from other activists – although the main organised march bypassed the conference centre.



(Tory party conference in Edinburgh 15/03/2014)

And the Manchester demo 29.7.2013, one of the largest marches in Manchester during the last 100 years. GAA took its big banner, and was lucky enough to meet Paula Paters from Disabled people Against Cuts (D-PAC), whom we had been communicating with for some time.



(Manchester demo 29.7.2013)

And GAA always supported the right to protest, and defended this right at our demo's and others events.



(Defend the right to protest banners on a rolling picket)

What was the key to GAA's success as a direct-action group – well, many things, its 5 main core members were committed and seasoned activists - above all it was GAA's honesty as a group, we mean that we were what we're if that makes sense; simply individuals drawn together by a common cause against a common enemy! We tried as best to avoid getting stuck in political disagreements with other groups and largely did our own thing. We were unpredictable, and up for it!

After about two years GAA was wound down. Some members had been on the picket for over two years – a long time to sustain a campaign. Atos feeling the heat from the public – (one of GAA's goals was to publicly shame Atos, and make known to the public at large via actions and its Fb site, just what was going on) decided to exit the WCA, and buy out its contract from the government having made hundreds of millions of pounds. In March of 2015, Maximus entered the picture taking over from Atos – albeit Atos still has involvement with the WCA. Our demands being somewhat met, with Atos leaving the sinking ship, it was decided to disband GAA.



(Second last picket – announcing our farewell)

The last demo took place on June 2014, where as a mark of respect to those who died under the governments so-called welfare reforms black balloons were released into the sky. It was a sad but fitting farewell to Glasgow Against Atos, a simple yet so effective campaign, that galvanised activist and disabled person alike.



GAA leaflets:

GAA produced a number a leaflet/flyers to promote the group and for propaganda.

‘Glasgow against Atos End the W on Welfare.’

This; the earliest flyer is single sided, and has the old email address on it, when GAA worked with another group the fight Racism Fight Imperialism.

‘National Day of Action Against Atos National Protest Against Workfare’

Single sided leaflet. This was a joint demo with GAA and Scottish Unemployed Workers’ Network (SUWN), whom we supported, and worked well with, they attended many of the GAA monthly pickets and this flyer likely relates to the 07/08/2013 Partick Job Centre demo. The flyer was produced by SUWN.

‘Atos Kills’ From Glasgow Against Atos The Sick, Disabled and People Who Care.’

Interesting and quirky flyer, single sided, with hand written text, (by the anarchist ‘Belfast Ian’.)

This leaflet identifies GAA as a disabled group, as we attracted and were made up from careers and those affected by welfare reforms. At this time Glasgow City Council were involved with the Commonwealth games, which Glasgow hosted and which Atos were a major sponsor. GAA demonstrated against Glasgow City Council who voted in favour of the games. GAA developed its campaign to include the commonwealth games or ‘common wealth shames’ as we called it.

‘Respect for the Disabled’

Double sided flyer with text and quotes – GAA was diversifying its approach as it was now firmly involved in the campaign against Atos. The text speaks with some authority, and quotes with statistics, and emotional appeal. Good propaganda!

‘Atos: Killing The Disabled’

Single sided flyer, designed and written by David Adam, with a bloodied hand motif. A flyer designed really to promote GAA and the campaign against Atos. The flyer was designed on Microsoft Publisher and is crude in its design, but effective in its delivery, and gets the information and message across. The flyer was printed professionally.

Also included is another version of this leaflet without border.

Campaign T Shirts:

GAA had two campaign T shirts. **‘Atos Skull’** Both in black. Glasgow Against Atos – Scrap Atos in red text, with a white skull motif.

‘Death Camp Atos’ the text ‘Death Camp’ in Germanic script in white, with the Totenkopf death head which was used by the Nazis. Below were the word in blood red letters ATOS. This was a controversial design, as it used a Nazi symbol, yet this was the very point GAA were trying to point out in the government’s treatment of the disabled! Another T shirt design used the same image and text, but had the word Atos at the top, and the words Death Camp below the skull.

The T shirts were worn by GAA members and also sold at demos and events to raise money to fund the campaign. Two of these shirts are in the GAA archive collection.

Badges:

Two designs have been included within the GAA archive collection.

‘Glasgow Against Atos’

A small badge with the Atos skull motif. The badge helped promote the group, and identify GAA.

‘Glasgow City Council Rotten To the Core’

A small badge designed by Gabby, for the event Glasgow City Council Rotten to the core – held in Glasgow Green to highlight the corruption of Glasgow City Council, which was held on 3.8.2013.

Stickers:

GAA produced (designed by David Adam) a four designs of stickers for the Atos National Demo 19.2.2013. (These stickers proved very effective, and were peppered on Cadogan Street and the Job centres, and can still be seen on the walls surrounding Cadogan Street. There were about 800 of these designs ordered.)

‘Atos Death Camp’. The O of the word Atos represented by a skull.

‘Glasgow Against Atos’, a wheelchair design with the person holding a megaphone. The words ‘Atos Kills’, can just be seen on the megaphone.

‘Atos Kills’ The famous, it was copied and used by many groups against Atos, with the bloody hands and the £ signs, a great piece of propaganda. Not sure if GAA designed this, but Mick made the GAA placards with the same design, and we adopted this design as a main GAA image.

‘Glasgow Against Atos: End The War On Welfare!’

As with GAA’s main logo on the Fb site, this sticker also had the angry red face, as ‘borrowed’ from the internet by Jan.

‘Down With All Governments’

The anarchistic side of GAA showing through. This self-sticker – you had to glue it yourself, was designed by Belfast Ian.

‘Atos Death Camp’

A small sticker designed by Belfast Ian, and which was very popular finding its way onto our megaphones and banners. Also features the ‘Totenkopf’ Nazi death head.

‘Atos Kills, Glasgow Against Atos’

A sheet of stickers. These ended up everywhere, small and indiscreet (not like GAA), but these could be stuck anywhere and were!

‘Atos Cutting Disability Benefit Kills’

Other groups campaigned against Atos, and we used their stickers – this one with the grim reaper is from Edinburgh against poverty.

GAA Business Card:

Some felt this a bit corporate – but we were always being asked for contact details, which during a busy and noisy demo is not easy. This business card was designed by Jan and features our main logo; the angry face.

CD disc:

This was produced by ‘Big Ian’ or ‘Belfast Ian’, who sings and plays guitar on this CD, which he sold at demo’s all proceeds going to the GAA campaign. The CD entitled ‘The Beautiful Lie’, was Ian’s own work, which GAA really appreciated! Ian used these CD’s to promote his music and GAA.

Beer Mats:

Designed by Gabby for the ‘Glasgow City Council Rotten To the Core’ event. Two designs, one round and one square in green and red, with text to this effect. The mat could be flipped to reveal another design. These were placed in pubs and eateries within the city centre of Glasgow.

A4 Leaflet designs.

‘Be Warned The Polis Are Not Your Pals!’

Rough drafted by John Cooper, and produced by David Adam. A double sided leaflet. Our demos were attracting the police, and the Police Liaison officers (PLO) often in plain clothes. So John decided to produce a leaflet for other activists to warn of the PLO. The leaflet gives advice, and information of PLO tactics, and ends with the famous – If A Cops about Say Nowt! (The rough draft is also included in the GAA archive.)

‘To the Militant strikers of the PCS’

GAA had along disagreement with Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union whose workers were employed by Atos, G4S and the Job centres. This was another John Cooper inscribed work in regard to PCS holding strikes in Glasgow for pay rises and work conditions. GAA were actually asked to support PCS but refused.

‘So where do we go from here?’

Another of John Coppers creations; a long letter style leaflet appealing t PCS union and trade unionists’ in general.

‘Atos: Killing The Disabled’

Written by David Adam, and likely a draft for a flyer, with statistics.

‘The Grand Old Duke Of York He Had Ten Thousand Men’

Yet another John Cooper penned leaflet – GAA were comfortable, possibly due to their anarchist leanings to challenge even other activists. This flyer (which was handed out at the Glasgow branch of Unite the Union) was in response to the Edinburgh anti-Tory conference demo on 15/03/2014. Our demo was called ‘Back to Eton Tory Goons..!’ and GAA arrived early to stand directly across from the Tory conference centre despite a police guarantee that no protestors would be allowed near the conference. GAA despite a lot of police pressure held their ground, waiting for the main march (which we’d agreed we would not be part off, as we suspected that it would despite having thousands of protestors not march past or even near the conference centre) to come and support us, some protestors did on their own accord, including anarchists, but we were really disappointed

with the ‘organised left’ response to this event. This leaflet was GAA’s response, and did not go down at all well with Unite!

A4 Posters:

GAA used a number of generic anti-Atos, and images fashioned to work as posters or placards.

‘Atos Kills’

The well-known and used fish blowing Nazi swastika bubbles, with wheel chair users going into the death factory. The Nazi connotation was rejected by some at the start of the Atos campaign – but as the deaths increased many groups used such like images and text.

‘In Memory Of All Atos, DWP, And Coalition Victims’

A poster for the remembrance service which GAA also posted onto the WCA assessment centre at Cadogan Street.

‘Death Certificate Cause of Death Atos’

Not our design, but a very effective design, used by many anti-Atos groups.

‘Mark & Helen Mullins’

GAA felt really strongly about the suicides of Mark & Helen in 2011. We often used images of them to highlight the plight of those affected by DWP welfare cuts.

‘Atos Kills’

The infamous ‘blood on your hands’, with the pound sign on the bloody palms. This was a very popular design used by many anti-Atos groups, and was used on GAA stickers and banners.

‘Atos Death Camp’

Another controversial image when using any reference to the Nazis was not always well received. The image also uses the death Head sign of the Nazis. Atos and G4S hated any insinuation of them being like Nazis!

‘Stephanie Bottrill’

Stephanie worried about the bedroom tax – committed suicide by throwing herself under a lorry. She was one of the first people documented as having died from this tax’s effects. (It has to be remembered that early on with WCA, Bedroom Tax, cuts to housing benefit, etc, that the effects largely had not really started to ‘bite.’ GAA appalled by these deaths – many more followed, used these stories to highlight the effects of the welfare cuts against disabled people.

‘Mark Wood’

Again another young man who was left without benefits, and was found in his home dead. He had not been told of his ‘benefit cuts’, and made do with what he had, finally succumbing to malnutrition, which was a key aspect in his post mortem. (At the time GAA simply could not keep up with the increasing amount of deaths caused directly or indirectly to welfare reform.) GAA used their profiles to bring attention to this issue, and to show the human suffering and not just the statistical numbers dying due to the governments reforms.

‘Elenore Tatton’

‘A Scottish mother of three has died just three weeks after being told by Atos that she was fit to work.’ Big Ian highlighted the case of Elenore Tatton. We mentioned her a lot outside Atos, and these images were glued to the front windows of the Atos Assessment centre. (In hindsight we should have done this for everyone!)

‘Disabled person being kicked’

Again – how GAA felt. We printed this for the web, not one of our own designs.

The Banners:

GAA are well remembered for their big banner ‘GLASGOW AGAINST ATOS - NO CUTS TO DISABLED BENEFITS’ – you always knew when GAA and moved in with the big banner, which took a real strong shoulder to hold especially in a wind, and was always good for blocking the cops!’

‘Atos Kills’

A simple banner on a cotton bed sheet and spray painted. This banner was made during a work shop for banners for the Glasgow Green ‘Rotten to the Core; demo. The banner was made by David Adam

‘Atos Kills’

Black material with Blue and red text ‘Atos Kills’ and a large silver cross in acrylic and spray paint. A highly visible banner and used on the remembrance service outside Cadogan Street on the 06/09/2013, (and most GAA demo’s.) The banner was designed and made by David Adam.

‘Atos = Benefits Cuts Robbing The Poor To Pay The Rich’

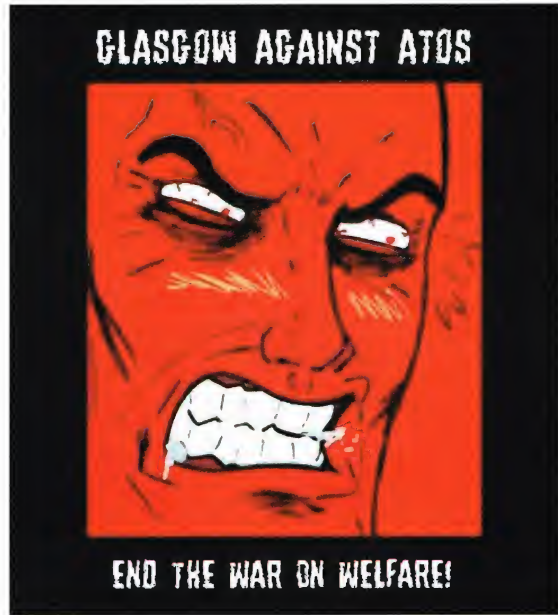
A brilliant banner – which was given to GAA by Belfast Ian (‘Big Ian’), and which nearly didn’t make it after being left in a wet bag, so the colours ran; which in the end made the banner even more eye catching!

‘Get Back To Eton You Tory Goons’

A specially made banner for the Edinburgh, Tory conference demo.



You can find Glasgow Against Atos on Facebook.



David Adam Glasgow Against Atos, 2015.

Glasgow against Atos is a campaign dedicated to supporting the victims of Atos, with objective of getting rid of Atos as soon as possible.

While Glasgow against Atos welcomes the involvement of everyone – including members of political groups or parties, Glasgow against Atos must not and should not be used as a platform or vehicle for any political group.

In view of this, I wish to make the following proposal to the meeting:

No party political banners, flags or posters are to be brought to Glasgow against Atos pickets or events.

No party political newspapers or literature is to be sold at Glasgow against Atos pickets or events.

Any funds raised at Glasgow against Atos events and pickets go to Glasgow against Atos.

As Glasgow against Atos is first and foremost a campaign in support of the victims of Atos; the sick and disabled, of course the banners of disabled rights groups such as Black Triangle, or other disabled groups are welcome.

Because Glasgow against Atos recognises that Atos have been brought in by the Government to implement benefit cuts, there is no conflict and no objection to Glasgow against Atos being involved in other anti-cuts campaigns such as the Bedroom Tax campaign.

If we can make it clear to everyone that Glasgow against Atos is an independent, non party political campaign we have the best chance of attracting and involving many others who have been reluctant to become involved.

For the sake of maximum unity and solidarity I would ask everyone to support this motion.

John Cooper.

GAA statement on unity

As regular readers of this blog will know, in recent months, our democratic right to defend the most vulnerable in our society has come under attack. The arrests of members of Glasgow Against Atos (GAA) led the campaign into the struggle in defence of the right to protest. Alongside the Glasgow Defence Campaign we have taken to the streets in defiance of the state harassment that we have faced. Through this it has become clear that the struggle for the sick and poor and the struggle to defend our rights is one and the same. If we cannot defend ourselves how are we to defend those under attack?

These recent developments have set in concrete a political position which has been unanimously agreed by members of GAA. A position of solidarity and unity which we would like to place on record here. It came to our attention after attending an Anti-Bedroom Tax meeting that there were individuals and organisations arguing to keep various struggles separate. In this case, that in the struggle against the Bedroom Tax it would be detrimental to speak about Atos, the DWP and the wider attacks on the working class. It was presented to us that ordinary working class people would feel "scared away" from Anti-Bedroom Tax campaigns if we were to speak about other issues, which in fact would most likely affect them as well. GAA feel that this tactic is not only insulting to the intelligence of ordinary people but also a mistake that could stop any chance of victory.

The ruling class is united in their attacks on the working class, we must be united to defeat them. Platforms must be shared by those fighting for the disabled or against the Bedroom Tax, by those fighting Welfare schemes or defending the right to protest. If we have any hope of success then we must begin to fight for real solidarity between campaigns. No issue can be left isolated.

Glasgow Against Atos re-affirms that it is against the entire attack by the ruling class on our people. Whether that be through benefit cuts, job losses, attacks on health and education or indeed racism. We give our solidarity to all those currently fighting back and pledge to do all we can to further the fightback.

On the streets, in the workplace, in the Job Centre's or the jails.

Unity is Strength.

IN ALL YOUR DECADENCE, PEOPLE DIE!!

I never imagined that when my husband became too sick to work he would be treated as an enemy of the state, I never thought when my daughters grew up and moved away from home that I might face eviction and homelessness, I didn't expect the unemployed would be resented by the working/striving members of their community for having their curtains closed after 8 am and when I became angry about the treatment of the poorest, most vulnerable people in society and decided to protest I never dreamed I would be arrested for dressing in a costume and having a toy gun from the pound shop. This is not some crazed right wing nightmare, you won't wake up and everything's alright, it has already happened.

This is an attack, a deadly attack on the poor, I hear ordinary people say "oh well we need to have cuts because we have so much debt" when it was obviously the banks that gambled billions of pounds they didn't even have on their books that are responsible, and as the city of London is the most unregulated banking sector in the world and billions are stolen every day from fraud, not to mention billions lost on tax evasion, why are ordinary people accepting responsibility?

I have been through a year of hell and worry due to ATOS notorious work capability test, I care for my husband, he has profound mental illness and was diagnosed with advanced heart disease aged 35, after two heart attacks/surgery and worsening mental health which has confined him to home for the past four years a general nurse employed by ATOS decided by looking at the answers on a form that he should be in the work related activity group. Now if he was fit for work, he would be working, I know many think the vast majority of disability claimants are fraudulent when the official figure is actually 0.5 percent. Thanks to the daily mail and other fascist media who tell you the party is over for scroungers, oh yes £71 a week JSA, who are they kidding, that wouldn't even cover a Tory loving journalist's restaurant bill. This Tory propaganda is working, sympathy for the sick, poor and unemployed is falling every year, disability hate crime on the rise, documentaries focusing on deprived areas help to give the impression that everyone on benefits is a drug addict/alcoholic, petty criminal and this helps drain any sympathy or solidarity that the general public have for those on benefits. You just have to look at the change in language, workers are now strivers (labour also quite happy to use this horrible word) anyone on any type of benefit is a shirker, scrounger, sponger, dole scum, benefit payments are now government handouts, public money is now called tax payers' money and the media have been happy to use this newspeak, if I was working I would take offence to being called a striver, somehow I don't think the woman

working for minimum wages in greggs dreams of being on the board of directors one day, who are they talking to, how long will they be allowed to patronise us and treat us like idiots!

So after this atos decision was made i appealed and six months later i received an unexpected letter from DWP saying that they had looked at his claim again and after reconsideration put him in support group which he should have been in from the beginning, during this time his health worsened and their change of decision never made him feel any better, he just said "they will just come after us next year for bedroom tax or another WCA or DLA, it will never end" he truly believes this government will kill him because he is a burden on society that can not be tolerated anymore, a useless thing that cannot work or contribute and therefore is not required.

So this is the year of the revolting bedroom tax. When cameron spoke of the bedroom tax in 2010 I thought it was some perverse tory fantasy they had dreamed up at a champagne breakfast and thought "no they will never get away with that", they did and now thousands of poor and sick people on benefits could lose their home. I have been a tenant of my housing association for 28 years and have never been in arrears, losing a quarter of my housing benefit is a very worrying prospect. We have been in our flat 10 years, I raised two intelligent, compassionate daughters who stayed on at school and have never claimed benefits, so that's a myth buster for the politicians who speak of generations of scroungers. Ironically if they did stay at home and "languish" on benefits I would not be having to pay bedroom tax. My husband has multiple health problems which means he wakes up during the night with violent nightmares where he acts out fights and shouts loudly, if i didnt have a spare room i would never get a proper rest, my other so called bedroom is six feet by ten feet and therefore under the minimum size (according to the overcrowding act, 2003) to be suitable as a bedroom for an adult, only for a child over 10, it also says the window needs to be accessible but with only a single bed in this room, the window is blocked. To say they are doing this to free up housing stock and bring waiting lists down is a lie, if this was the case then working tenants would be asked to downsize, in fact your working neighbour can have as many spare rooms as he wants and let out those rooms for profit, whilst his disabled neighbour is punished for being sick and unable to work. I doubt i could find a 10 year old lodger for my small bedroom that will cough up rent every month! Also how dare they suggest vulnerable people take in strangers as lodgers which could lead to all other kinds of problems.

Consider this senario, In april bedroom tax begins, having to make a choice to eat or pay rent, eventually we get into arrears, my landlord does not have a one bedroom property even if we were willing to move, which we are not, so we get evicted and are homeless and have to turn to the private sector and they end up paying more in housing benefit for a one bedroom flat than they were for the flat I was evicted from. This does not make any sense to

me especially as that housing benefit, public money goes straight into a private landlords bank account instead of a non profit housing association, and if they have to put people in temporary accommodation that will cost much more than social housing rent. So if you are a private landlord the government pay inflated rents for slums, whilst the local housing association with affordable rents will be evicting people from their home, they are not a co habiting couple on benefits residing in an underoccupied property, THEY ARE PEOPLES HOMES, my husband was born on and raised on this street, we thought that was our last move, that we would be here for life, now i don't feel safe and secure here anymore, i doesn't feel like my home now, like we are in limbo with an uncertain future, we have been together 33 years since age of 14 and over the years I have been through countless traumas and undscribable crisis points due to his mental health but I have never felt so frightened and despairing as i do now.

What kind of future do they want? Where drug addicts will rip your face off for a few quid because they have been left with no money or support, or single parents will get desperate and turn to the sex industry to feed their kids and put themselves in danger, and the sick and disabled are left to die of poverty and neglect, so that's it, as they say, "the party is over scoungers" couldn't have been a very good party, I don't even remember it.

jan

glasgow

ATOS: KILLING THE DISABLED.

Since 2008, Atos, a French IT company have been managing the governments Work Capability Assessments (WCA.) Atos is a multinational conglomerate and was paid 400 million in contracts in August 2012 (bringing their total payment to 3 billion.)

Most people know these Work Capability Assessments as ‘benefit medicals or fitness to work tests.’ Throughout the UK, there are about 100 assessment centres. It is planned to ‘review’ as the government put it - up to four million disabled people currently receiving disability benefits. Most of these disabled people have chronic or life changing illnesses and disabilities, or have a progressive illness, many are terminally ill - which means they cannot work.

The government, by using the WCA - which has no medical basis as a test, but crudely relies on answering a series of closed-ended questions, (which further limits the claimants’ ability to answer, have stacked the odds against the claimant - as it’s the Department of Work and Pension’s (DWP) Decision Maker (DM) that also decides who passes the Atos test), plan to cut those legitimately claiming disability benefits by nearly 20%. These are cruel cuts riding on the back of a mercilessly unfair system, with the odds stacked against the claimant – 500,000 people who received a disability benefit have had this removed. Furthermore -over 50% of cuts fall in just two areas which together make up only 25% of government spending: benefits (to be cut by 20%) most of which is for disabled people and people in poverty. Local government (to be cut by over 40%) most of which (60%) is for social care (which will be cut by 33%).

At their 2012 annual general practice conference, the United Kingdom Local Medical Committees (UKLMC) conference passed the following motion: “WCA should end with immediate effect and be replaced with a rigorous and safe system that does not cause avoidable harm to some of the weakest and most vulnerable in society.”

Glasgow Against ATOS says, **“Together, We Will Win!”**

Glasgow Against ATOS have been campaigning against the Government hired contract killers ATOS for almost two years. ATOS are the miracle workers whose magic computer “assessments” manage to find chronically sick, disabled and dying claimants fit for work.

Their quack assessments have contributed directly and indirectly to the deaths of thousands of people.

We fight back against their cull of the working class, with direct action, occupations, pickets and raising public awareness.

Many of the people affected by ATOS are also affected by the Bedroom Tax, and all working class people are victims of the Government’s so-called austerity measures – in reality a series of brutal attacks on the poorest in society.

So Glasgow Against ATOS are also against the Bedroom Tax, and for that matter **all** attacks on working people’s lives.

Don’t be fooled into thinking you can appeal to the politicians sense of reason or fairness- they don’t have any, - they would rather you went off and died!

This fight can only be won by united working class direct action, not by appealing to politicians.

So become involved in the fight against the Bedroom Tax.

Become involved in the fight against ATOS

Join the Fightback and say, “Enough is enough” - and together, **We Will Win!**

Visit us on Facebook at Glasgow Against ATOS.

Date: Sat, 9 Mar 2013 16:30:37 +0000
Subject: GAA Free Speech Demo Held and Upcoming Events
From: glasgowagainstatos2012@gmail.com

A big well done and thank you to everyone for supporting Thursdays Free Speech Demonstration in Glasgow City Centre! I saw pictures on facebook and it looked very well organised and popular with the public.

How do people feel it went? Is there anything that we could do better or avoid doing next time? Did we raise any funds towards the cost of possible court fines...? Bring your thoughts and info to the next campaign meeting or email them out if you can't make it along. Joey is working on a public report of the demo for the blog. It'll be circulated when its done.

Good organisation is the key to defending our democratic rights to protest. The police would have been aware we were organised for the demo and so were told to keep a low profile. The challenge for us now is to keep up this level of organisation for future demonstrations and pickets. We can't let our guards down – the police have obviously been instructed to make arrests in order to intimidate people away from our growing campaign.

With unity and good organisation we can be confident hitting the streets in future always keeping in mind that the public's sympathy lies with us not the police.

Upcoming GAA events are copied below. Hope to see you all soon!

Venceremos! (WE WILL WIN!)

Dominic

Upcoming GAA meetings and events

Next Campaign meeting

Wednesday 13 March, 7-9pm,

Unite the Union offices,

145-65 West Regent Street,

City Centre

(Disabled access)

Defend The Right To Protest! Support the Glasgow Against Atos 2 on the eve of their court appearance!

Thursday 21 March, campaign to agree either 12.30-2pm or 4.30-6pm (email your preference if you can't make it to the campaign meeting),
Outside The Royal Bank of Scotland
Gordon Street
Glasgow city centre

Court Protest - Support the Glasgow Against Atos 2! Drop the charges!

Friday 22 March, 11am-12noon

Outside the front of Glasgow Sheriff Court

All supporters are invited to join Danny and Dominic in the court as well. They are down to appear at 12noon.

Next Rolling Picket – Oppose the War on Welfare!

Friday 29 March, assemble 12.30pm

Atos Offices,

Cadogan St

City Centre

Be Warned . . . The Polis are not your pals!



You may have noticed a new development recently at pickets; demo's and protests – the appearance of police officers wearing baby blue bibs, with the words Police Liaison Officer on the back.

According to the Police, these officers are merely to *'facilitate'* your lawful right to peaceful public protest.

Don't Be Fooled by This;

The Police Liaison Officer (PLO) has a number of objectives – none of which is in our interest.

Their role is to gather information, as forward intelligence on protestors and to control and contain the pickets/demo's and protests.

They do this in a number of ways. Firstly; they engage people in seemingly innocent conversation – asking questions like, "I'm sure I've seen you at another demo before, where do you come from?" Or, "Do you live around here, do you work locally?" Before long the questions turn to, "Who's that guy over there, what's his name, and what group do you represent, and who's in charge of the demo?"

In reality - these seemingly innocent questions are part of a deliberate process of gathering intelligence on activists, to build a 'profile' of the group's structure, membership, movements and organisers'.

As well as intelligence gathering, Police Liaison Officers also help control and contain the demo, by identifying passive and non-passive activists, so other officers can target the more active protestors.

They generally form a line in front of the protestors instructing them to stay on the pavement "for your own safety." Their real motive is not crowd safety – but **crowd control!**

The PLO are highly trained, and their actions are deliberate and precisely coordinated. They are sometimes used as a pre-emptive strike in police operations against activists, and also work in plain clothes visiting activists at their place of work or even their home.

Police Liaison Officers are not there to help or assist you – or because they care about your cause – (if they really cared about your cause, they would be part of the demonstration!) **And above all, they are definitely not your pals!**

The best way to deal with them (or any police officer), is to tell them you don't want to talk to them – or just say firmly; **NO COMMENT**, and carry on protesting.

Don't get drawn into a discussion about this, – just keep stum, and leave it at that! Don't give the cops **any** information they could use to harm your working class activist buddies.

You are not obliged to give the police any information unless they are arresting you. They can only arrest you if you have, or are suspected of committing an offence. If they approach you or anyone else make sure they are being filmed, take their numbers and get details from witnesses.

So – remember, **IF A COPS ABOUT, - SAY NOWT!**



Contact **Glasgow Anarchist Collective** via Facebook.

pavement for example, "for your own safety."
Their concern is not crowd safety - but
crowd control.

They are highly trained in what they do, and
their actions are deliberate & precisely
co-ordinated.

They are not there to help or assist you, - or
because they care about your cause, - if they
~~were~~ they would be part of the demonstration!
And above all, they are definitely not your pals!

The best way to deal with them or with any other
protesting police officers, is to tell them you
don't want to talk to them & turn away.
Don't get drawn into a discussion about
this with them - just keep stum, & leave
it ~~at that~~ that.

Don't give the cops any information they could
use to harm your working class buddies.
So remember, IF A COP ASK ABOUT, SAY NAUT!

1020
N.Y.C.

Police | DANGER | Police | DANGER.

J. Cooper

SALUS

Who are ‘Salus’?

Salus (a not for profit organisation), is an NHS based provider of Occupational Health, Safety and Return to Work Services across the public and private sectors and set up in 1996. With an annual turnover of £10million, they return a surplus of £1 million a year to the NHS. It is the largest multidisciplinary service of the NHS and operates as a social enterprise model. [‘Social enterprise model’, is an interesting term – and an increasingly popular business model, based on, *they’re not in it for the money, are mould breakers, and they meet a need.* The first social enterprises in the UK were co-operatives and mutual societies. Today, however, there is a growing number of ‘legal structures’ to choose from.]

Where are they in Glasgow?

SALUS office, 348-382 Argyle Street. (It’s virtually around the corner from Atos assessment centre.) The office is at ground level, and has a clear glass surround. A reception area, with a waiting room and two corridors leads off to the assessment rooms. Unlike Atos - Salus have decided that because they are NHS accessed, they will not use security guards within their premises.

What do Salus do?

Salus were originally commissioned to undertake the West Region and Edinburgh City in respect of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments as part of the [so called] reform on welfare. Previously known as Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the replacement PIP service commenced in Scotland in June 2013. It is estimated around 325,000 assessments will be undertaken between 2013 and 2017.

As a company; Salus are an in-house, absence management, return to work services, improving productivity through the performance of staff by reducing sickness absence. The Salus Return to Work Services model is a vocational rehabilitation model.

From August 2011, Salus have been chosen to support the prime agencies in delivering the single work programme throughout the UK, as part of the government’s welfare to work programme.

The costs

PIP assessments take twice as long to process than DLA and cost nearly four times as much. "The administration cost for DLA was £49 per claim compared to £182 for PIP, and the expected average decision time for DLA was 37 days and for PIP its 74 days.

Despite all the focus regarding returning to work; Salus will still be using heavily criticised assessment procedures dictated by the DWP.